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Oceanic Exchanges

Tracing Global Information Networks In Historical
Newspaper Repositories, 1840-1914

DIGGING INTO DATA
C H A L L E N G E

Oceanic Exchanges (OcEx) is funded through the [Transatlantic Partnership for Social Sciences and Humanities 2016 Digging Into Data Challenge](#).

See: <http://oceanicexchanges.org/>

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Project partners

- Argentina (MINCyT);
- Mexico (CONACYT);
- United States (NEH, NSF, IMLS)
- Brazil (FAPESP);
- Canada (SSHRC, NSERC, FRQ);
- Finland (AKA);
- France (ANR);
- Germany (DFG);
- Netherlands (NWO);
- Portugal (FCT);
- United Kingdom (AHRC, ESRC)

The Team of PIs

- **Northeastern University, US. Ryan Cordell (Consortium PI)**
- University of Nebraska–Lincoln, US. Elizabeth Lorang
- North Carolina State University, US. Paul Fyfe
- University of Turku, Finland. Hannu Salmi
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- Loughborough University, UK. Melodee Beals
- Utrecht University, Netherlands. Jaap Verheul
- National Autonomous University of Mexico. Isabel Galina Russell
- Universität Stuttgart. Steffen Koch

Data Providers

Name	URL	Num. of pp.
Australia's Trove newspapers	http://trove.nla.gov.au/	18.5 million
British Newspapers Archive	http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/	14.5 million
Chronicling America in the United States	http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/	11 million
Europeana Newspapers	http://europeana-newspapers.eu/	20 million
Hemeroteca Nacional Digital de México	http://www.hndm.unam.mx	9 million
National Library of Finland	http://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi/sanomalehti	2 million
National Library of the Netherlands	http://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten/	11 million
National Library of Wales	http://newspapers.library.wales/	1.1 million
New Zealand's PapersPast	http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/	4 million

Objectives – flow of information



Precursors ...

Nederland

- [Translantis: The Emergence of the United States as a Reference Culture in Public Discourse in the Netherlands, 1890–1990](#) (NWO, 2013–2018)
- [Asymmetrical Encounters: Digital Approaches to Reference Cultures in Europe, 1800–2000](#) (HERA, 2013–2016)

Suomi

- [Travelling Notions of Culture: Itineraries of Bildung and Civilisation in Early Nineteenth-Century Europe](#) (Academy of Finland, 2012–2016)
- [Computational History and the Transformation of Public Discourse in Finland, 1640–1910](#) (Academy of Finland, 2016–2019)

United Kingdom

- [Scissors & Paste Database](#) (LBORO)
- [Scissors-and-Paste-O-Meter](#) (LBORO)

United States of America

- [Viral Texts: Mapping Networks of Reprinting in Nineteenth-Century Newspapers and Magazines](#) (NEH, ACLS)
- [Image Analysis for Archival Discovery \(Aida\)](#) (NEH, 2014–2016)
- [Nineteenth-Century Newspaper Analytics](#) (NC State, Laboratory for Analytic Sciences, 2014–2016)



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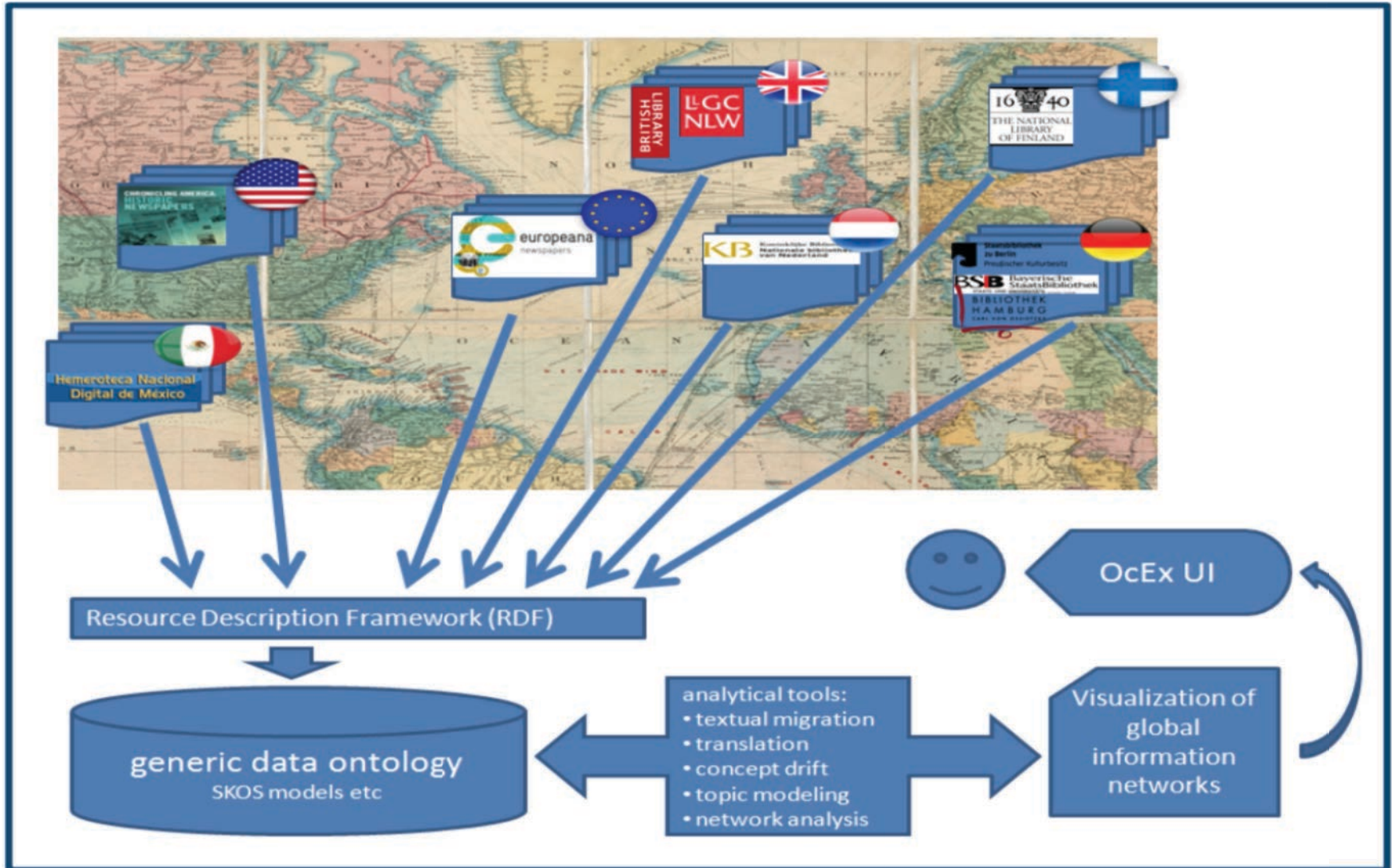
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Historic Newspapers on www.europeana.eu



Main AIMS

- 1) To model and visualize textual migration and viral culture via case studies.
- 2) To create a networked, generic ontology to describe the different genres, forms, and textual elements that emerged during the nineteenth century.
- 3) To link digital repositories as a network, via computational tools connected across remotely hosted datasets.



Source: Oceanic Exchanges funding bid, 2016

Research Questions

1. Which stories spread between nations and how quickly?
2. Which texts were translated and resonated across languages?
3. How did textual copying (reprinting) operate internationally compared to conceptual copying (ideas spread)?
4. How did the migration of texts facilitate the circulation of knowledge, ideas, and concepts, and how were these ideas transformed as they moved from one Atlantic context to another?
5. How did geopolitical realities (e.g. economic integration, technology, migration, geopolitical power) influence the directionality of these transnational exchanges?

Ongoing case studies ...

- **Tracing the Traffic of Cholera in Nineteenth-Century Newspaper Repositories** (Jana Keck, Moritz Knabben, Steffen Koch)
- **The Origins of Fake News: Lajos Kossuth, Political Celebrity, and Dis/Information in the Nineteenth-Century Press** (Paul Fyfe, Jana Keck, Mila Oiva, Jamie Parker)
- **Attitudes towards female emigration from Great Britain to North America 1850- 1914** (Tessa Hauswedell and Julianne Nyhan)

Objectives include:

- A unified ontology of genres, forms, and textual elements
- to support transnational annotation of digitized newspapers and
- develop a shared vocabulary for newspaper research.

Challenges



Steps Involved

- Collect metadata fields with definitions from host countries.
- Build RDF/XML compatible metadata ontology
- **Conducting interviews with institutions in order to retrace and understand the choices made in the digitization processes.**
- Sharing the results of this review with libraries and others.

Blog posts by Dr Melodee Beals: <https://oceanicexchanges.org/>

The Times Digital Archive

Collection History

The Times Digital Archive was the first online digitized newspaper collection of British newspapers. This early adoption of digitization, building upon the ubiquity of Palmer's index of the Times, ensured its prominence in historical and journalistic research, including its particular use by the House of Lords in researching past legal debates. As of 2013, it was the most searched digitized newspaper database among Cengage's news media collections.

Produced by then Thompson Gale publishers, the collection debuted in 2002. Its initial remit was to make available the entirety of the Times, including its previous incarnations, from 1785-1985. This initial material was digitized in a relatively short period of time (2002-3), allowing for a consistency of staff, equipment, method and product, both in terms of image and OCR quality. The content was released in several batches, the first being 1936-1946, growing monthly to include 1880-1985 by the end of 2002 and the whole 200 years by the close of 2003.

Since its acquisition by Cengage in 2007, Gale has continued to expand the collection, which now currently offers the complete run of the publication from 1785 to 2010.

Early results of interviews with private and public digital newspaper providers



To sum up ...

Not about building a totalizing research infrastructure or one encompassing archive.

Explore conditions through which researchers can work across collections.

Contributing to uncovering and making visible the assumptions, preferences, omissions and choices made in the digitization process by public institutions.

Working with libraries to improve interoperability.